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Report of the first regular session 2006 (20 to 27 January 2006, New York)*

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* The compilation of data required to provide the Executive Board with the most current information has delayed the submission of the present report.

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I. Organizational matters

1. The first regular session 2006 of the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA was held at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 24 to 27 January.

2. The Executive Board elected the following members of the Bureau for 2006:

President: H.E. Mr. Valery P. Kuchinsky	(Ukraine)
Vice-President: Mr. Kazuo Sunaga	(Japan)
Vice-President: H.E. Mr. Crispin Grey-Johnson	(Gambia).
Vice President: H.E. Ms. Adiyatwidi Adiwoso Asmady	(Indonesia)
Vice-President: Mr. George W. Talbot	(Guyana)

3. Upon his election, the new President recognized the work of the outgoing Bureau and thanked them for their dedication. The President recalled the 2005 World Summit Outcome, bestowing individual and collective responsibilities to deliver on international development commitments, and stressed that UNDP would be on the forefront of the implementation of the far-reaching reforms expected in 2006.

4. The Executive Board approved the agenda and work plan for its first regular session 2006 (DP/2006/L.1), and its annual work plan 2006 (DP/2006/CRP.1). The report for the second regular session of the 2005 Executive Board (DP/2006/1) was also approved.

5. At its first regular session 2006, the Executive Board adopted ten decisions, including the overview of decisions, and reviewed the work plan for the annual session in June 2006.

6. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 2005 appeared in document DP/2006/2, while decisions adopted at the first regular session 2006 were included in document DP/2006/10, which could be accessed on the website of the Executive Board secretariat at www.undp.org/execbrd.

7. Following informal consultations, the Executive Board adopted decision 2006/7 whereby it decided to continue the consultations and discussions on the working methods of the Board, requesting UNDP and UNFPA to present suggestions at the annual session 2006 on further enhancements to those methods.

Statement by the Administrator

8. In his address to the Executive Board, the Administrator recalled the renewed international commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that had emerged from the 2005 World Summit and outlined his vision of the role of UNDP. The Administrator drew particular attention to:

(a) The follow-up to the 2005 World Summit and the United Nations reform process, whereby UNDP stands committed to the development of comprehensive frameworks that align the MDGs with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), supports the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the Democracy Fund, and is moving ahead to strengthen the Resident Coordinator system and the proposed scaling-up of the United Nations

Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) as the United Nations common programme;

(b) The integrating, facilitating and coordinating role conferred upon UNDP within the larger United Nations Development Group (UNDG), noting that its work focuses on the quality, sustainability and distributional aspects of growth as well as on coping with natural disasters and man-made crises;

(c) The importance of developing national capacities in the prescribed practice areas of crisis prevention and recovery, democratic governance, poverty reduction, energy and environment, HIV/AIDS, and gender equality, while acknowledging the growing importance of South-South cooperation;

(d) The inherent tension between country-driven programmes and a corporate strategic direction, the emerging relevance of new actors and the redefinition of the role of the state brought about by the globalization process, which constitute key challenges ahead;

(e) The reaffirmation of the Associate Administrator as the chief operating officer of UNDP, the establishment of new internal structures in support of senior management, renewed attention to staff deployment and to the use of the associated funds and programmes (UNIFEM, UNICEF and UNV), which are integral elements of the ongoing process of management review; and

(f) The increase in UNDP total income to over $4 billion, fuelled by increases in both core and non-core resources, which leaves the organization $180 million short of the 2007 income target.

9. The Administrator recognized and thanked the departing Directors of the Regional Bureaux for Africa, the Arab States and Latin America and the Caribbean, for their individual dedication to furthering development and the ideals of the United Nations as well as for their respective contributions to modernizing UNDP.

10. The Administrator thanked the outgoing Associate Administrator warmly for his seven years of dedicated service to UNDP and welcomed the newly appointed Associate Administrator.

11. Delegations commended the Administrator for his statement and concurred with his overall analysis, conclusions and vision for the future of UNDP and its role in furthering the broader process of United Nations reform. They assured the Administrator of their strong support and expressed their eagerness to work with him and his team.

12. Member states were particularly encouraged by the importance the Administrator attached to the United Nations reform process and to a new international aid architecture, and by his engagement in strengthening the resident coordinator system as part of the scaling-up of UNDG at the operational level.

13. Members noted that 2006 would be a crucial year in which to revitalize the operational arm of the United Nations. Stressing the need for urgent action to assist countries in achieving the MDGs, delegations called for continued UNDP leadership in support of greater UNDG integration and closer adherence to the principles of aid effectiveness enshrined in the Paris declaration on simplification and harmonization.

14. Delegations reiterated their support for the thematic focus of UNDP interventions as well as the continued emphasis on capacity development and national ownership; applauded the commitment to greater accountability and transparency; and noted the efforts undertaken to strengthen gender mainstreaming. Delegations also noted with satisfaction the role of UNDP in crisis prevention and

recovery, drawing attention to the peace and development nexus in the context of the future work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

15. In response, the Administrator thanked delegations for their thoughtful contributions and inputs, and was pleased to note the existence of a broad agreement among members on the basic premises of his vision. He expressed the hope that, notwithstanding differences in emphasis, the convergence of views manifested by members of the Board together with the international commitments made during the 2005 World Summit would soon translate into action in the areas of aid and trade. He informed Board members that the results of a UNDG-wide survey on the collective implementation of the harmonization process would soon be available.

UNDP segment

II. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

16. Speaking on behalf of the Associate Administrator, the Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Development Policy (BDP), introduced the item on the UNDP multi-year funding framework (MYFF) and on the development of the next MYFF, noting that this was the first year for which strategic planning and results were directly reported in Atlas. The Assistant Administrator emphasized that the MYFF, 2008-2011, was being developed within the context of an evolving external environment as postulated in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Progress had also been made on linking the proposed programme requirements to resource requirements. The MYFF team leader reported on the timeline for the end-of-cycle assessment of performance of the MYFF, 2007-2007, and on the ongoing consultative process leading to the preparation of the MYFF, 2008-2011.

17. Delegations took note of the ongoing work and called upon the Administrator to report on the emerging strategic vision, programme directions and organizational strategy at the annual session, 2006, of the Executive Board.

18. The Executive Board adopted decision 2006/1 on the MYFF, 2004-2007.

III. Country programmes and related matters

Approval of country programmes

19. In introducing the item on country programmes, the Vice-President recalled that, in accordance with decision 2001/11, country programmes would be approved on a no-objection basis without presentation or discussion, unless at least five Board members had requested the secretariat in writing before the meeting to bring a particular country programme before the Executive Board. The Vice-President indicated that no such request had been submitted to the secretariat.

20. The Assistant Administrator and Director, BDP, introduced the item on country programmes on behalf of the Associate Administrator, submitting for consideration

and approval two regional programmes and 23 country programmes, the drafts of which had been reviewed at the annual session and at the second regular session 2005 of the Executive Board.

21. The Executive Board approved the following UNDP country programmes submitted in 2005 on a no-objection basis without presentation or discussion: Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Ghana, Namibia, Swaziland, Uganda; the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Viet Nam; Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Turkey, Ukraine; Guyana, Peru, and the Turks and Caicos Islands. The Board also approved, on a no-objection basis without presentation or discussion, the regional programme document for the Arab States, 2006-2009, and the regional programme document for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, 2006-2010.

22. Delegations from countries whose programmes had been approved welcomed the alignment of the newly approved country programmes with individual national priorities, and urged UNDP to continue adhering to the principle of national ownership while furthering the process of simplifying and harmonizing procedures.

23. One delegation noted that, in approving the UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP Common Country Programme for Cape Verde, the Executive Board had acted solely on the elements of the document relating to UNDP. It urged UNDP to remain accountable to the Executive Board for the implementation of those elements by fulfilling the appropriate reporting obligations.

Report of the UNDP assessment mission to Myanmar

24. The Assistant Secretary-General and Director, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) introduced the note by the Administrator on assistance to Myanmar (DP/2006/4) summarizing the findings of the independent assessment mission of the Human Development Initiative, phase IV (HDI-IV), and stressed that all components of the HDI-IV programme were found to have been designed and implemented in full conformity with the relevant prior decisions of the Executive Board (decisions 98/14 of 19 June 1998, 2001/15 of 14 September 2001, 2003/2 of 23 January 2003, 2004/2 of 30 January 2004, and 2005/3 of 28 January 2005).

25. The Resident Representative, UNDP Myanmar, briefed the Executive Board on the major conclusions, recommendations and strategic challenges identified by a two-member international independent assessment mission of the HDI-IV. The report found that the initiative had had a positive impact on rural poverty and held promise as a model for extended future efforts, while noting that UNDP was adequately following up on the recommendations of the 2004 assessment on the livelihoods and income-generating components of the initiative, as well as on the establishment of linkages between the HIV/AIDS project and the community development programme.

26. In follow-up to the recommendations of the assessment mission, the Resident Representative informed the Board that UNDP was actively sharing lessons learned with the wider community of practitioners, and that the results of impact evaluation missions currently under way would be available by May 2006. The Resident Representative noted that the support of the Executive Board for HDI-IV had made the geographic expansion of interventions possible, but stressed that the completion of work in expansion areas would require an extension of the present phase of the HDI.

27. The Resident Representative pointed out that there was evidence of growing vulnerability in Myanmar, leading to a deterioration of the humanitarian situation and a fragmentation of community networks. He stressed that the current challenge faced by the United Nations and assistance partners consists in preventing the exhaustion of social capital, alleviating the plight of civilian populations in conflict zones, and providing adequate protection to the most vulnerable groups in areas of limited access.

28. Members of the Board expressed concern over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Myanmar; commended the efforts of UNDP and the United Nations country team (UNCT); acknowledged that the HDI had contributed to alleviating the plight of vulnerable communities; and recognized that the HDI should be extended in time and expanded in coverage.

29. The Executive Board adopted decision 2006/2 on the report of the assessment mission to Myanmar.

IV-V. Evaluation/Gender in UNDP

30. The Administrator introduced the topic, reaffirming the centrality of women's empowerment and gender equality in the work of UNDP and noting that the 2005 evaluation of gender mainstreaming constitutes a baseline for the implementation of a common agenda on gender equality. While recognizing the need to strengthen policies and field-based competencies, and to leverage the knowledge, advocacy and expertise of UNIFEM more effectively, the Administrator stressed that the visibility and impact of past work on gender equality has been inadequately monitored and documented. The Administrator presented an overview of the UNDP response to the evaluation of gender mainstreaming (DP/2006/7), announcing, on this occasion, the allocation of an additional $5 million per year from core resources for 2006 and 2007 towards the implementation of the gender action plan; the establishment of two new professional posts in the Gender Unit; and the introduction of enhanced systems to better capture resources allocated to gender-related activities and gender equality results. To ensure the accountability of senior management against the corporate commitments in this area, a gender steering and implementation committee has been established under the direct chairmanship of the Administrator, tasked with the periodic review of progress in gender mainstreaming on a regional basis.

31. The Director, Evaluation Office, summarized the findings and recommendations of the independent evaluation of gender mainstreaming in UNDP. The Assistant Secretary-General and Director, Bureau for Development Policy, provided additional details on the content of the management response to the evaluation of gender mainstreaming; summarized the contents of the 2005 progress report (DP/2006/8); and presented the corporate objectives contained in the gender action plan for 2006-2007 (DP/2006/9).

32. Delegates welcomed the constructive manner in which UNDP had reacted to the independent evaluation and, while expressing concern over the shortcomings identified by the evaluators, were encouraged both by the commitment of the Administrator and by his proposed course of action. The Executive Board was

particularly encouraged by the establishment of the gender steering and implementation committee, chaired by the Administrator, and called for additional steps to enhance incentive and accountability systems for staff at the operational level as well as across senior management.

33. The Executive Board adopted decision 2006/3 on the evaluation of gender mainstreaming and the gender action plan, and requested that the Administrator report to the Board on its implementation at the first regular session in January 2007.

VI. United Nations Capital Development Fund

34. The Associate Administrator recalled Executive Board decision DP/2005/29 welcoming the Business Plan, 2005-2007, of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), "Investing in the Least Developed Countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals", in which it requested UNCDF to report on its budgeting and programming decision-making processes at the first regular session of the Board in 2006. In introducing the item on UNCDF, the Associate Administrator noted that the activities of the Fund in microfinance and local development were aligned with the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries; with the MDGs; and with the practice areas and service lines of UNDP. He reported that while UNCDF management restructuring had been completed, attention was now focused on addressing three remaining challenges, namely: mobilizing resources to achieve the stated goals, continuing to strengthen the field-based offices, and strengthening the partnership with UNDP.

35. The Executive Secretary of UNCDF presented the budgeting and decision-making processes and reported on the strategic review of its business plan and programmes; on the decentralization of the organizational structure of the Fund; on the establishment of a strong, well-defined strategic, operational and financial partnership with UNDP; and on budgeting priorities and constraints. He noted that a resource mobilization strategy in support of the proposed business plan would hinge on increased contributions as well as on diversification of sources of income.

36. Delegations welcomed the appointment of the new Executive Director and commended him for the clarity and focus of the UNCDF business plan, reiterating the relevance of the Fund in providing support to least developed countries (LDCs). Delegations expressed overall support for the business plan, encouraged management to pursue closer alignment with UNDP and its MYFF; and requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Executive Board at its annual session on the status of the implementation of the business plan.

37. Delegations called on members to provide financial support to UNCDF, and, noting an excessive reliance on a restricted number of donors for as much as 90 per cent of its core funding, called for greater diversification of funding sources. Echoing this concern, the delegations of Sweden and Norway indicated that their respective financial contributions to UNCDF would be subject to review if no significant improvements were made in the expansion and broadening of the resource base by September 2005.

38. The Executive Director assured members of the Board that UNCDF management would be pursuing an aggressive resource mobilization strategy over the following 60 days, offering partners a range of flexible funding mechanisms.

39. The Executive Board adopted decision 2006/4 on the UNCDF budgeting and programming decision-making process.

VII. United Nations Development Fund for Women

40. Her Excellency the Ambassador of Zambia to the United States, a member of the Advisory Panel to the Consultative Committee of United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), briefed the Executive Board on the scope, method and findings of the organizational assessment. According to the Advisory Panel, while the structure and programmes of the UNIFEM had evolved significantly in response to an improving political context in support of the empowerment of women and gender equality, the authority and status of UNIFEM had remained static and the expansion of its core resource base was deemed inadequate. In response to the assessed problems, a set of time-bound recommendations on the future role and structure of UNIFEM was presented in the context of the broader United Nations system.

41. One delegation, speaking on behalf of the Consultative Committee of UNIFEM, indicated that the report of the Advisory Panel had not been formally endorsed since the Consultative Committee felt that the report should first be the subject of a broad discussion within the United Nations system that would feed into the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General on the mandates and funds of the United Nations.

42. Delegations welcomed the efforts of UNIFEM to strengthen coordination and technical support on gender equality in the UNCTs in line with the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR); called on Member States to increase their contributions to the fund; called for strengthened collaboration between UNDP and UNIFEM at the programme level; called on the Administrator to ensure UNIFEM access to relevant United Nations forums; and requested that he report on progress to the Executive Board at its annual session in June 2006.

43. The Executive Board adopted decision 2006/5 on the organizational assessment of UNIFEM.

VIII. United Nations Office for Project Services

44. In compliance with Executive Board decision 2005/36, the Executive Director, a.i., of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) reported to the Executive Board on progress achieved in the implementation of actions to restore the viability of UNOPS (DP/2006/11); updated members on the projected 2005 year-end financial results; and outlined the proposed actions to be implemented in 2006-2007. Members were assured that the relocation of UNOPS headquarters, its support services and its European regional office to Copenhagen, scheduled for July 2006, and the consolidation of its two regional African offices, were part of a package of strategic measures to achieve sustained financial health and to continue being a

value-adding service-provider for the United Nations. The relocation process was being planned in such a way as to minimize disruptions in day-to-day operations while providing maximum assistance to relocating and separating staff. UNOPS projected that the transformation programme would result in a $10 billion reduction in annual costs, paving the way for the gradual rebuilding of the mandated operational reserve. Noting the risks inherent to the transformation process, namely, the ability to implement in a timely and efficient manner, the ability to maintain client confidence and the preservation of staff morale, the Executive Director, a.i., recognized the importance of support from the Executive Board, the Management Coordination Committee and all staff in ensuring the success of the transformation programme. He also informed members of progress made in cleaning up and rationalizing the business portfolio.

45. Delegations commended the Executive Director, a.i., for his leadership in the conduct of the UNOPS transformation programme and concurred with much of his vision for the remainder of the process. They assured him of their support and asked to be kept abreast of progress pursuant to decision 2005/36. They encouraged UNOPS to pursue further diversification of its portfolio, including through the provision of services in emergency and post-conflict situations. The United States delegation inquired into measures being undertaken to assist locally recruited staff not contemplated by the relocation process.

46. The Executive Director, a.i., assured the Executive Board that UNOPS was sparing no effort in relocating staff in both the professional and general services categories through relocation, placement in other New York-based United Nations organizations and the provision of separation packages.

47. The Executive Board adopted decision 2006/6 on the activities of UNOPS.

Joint UNDP/UNFPA segment

IX. Recommendations of the Board of Auditors

UNDP

48. The Director and Comptroller, Office of Finance of the Bureau of Management (BOM), introduced the follow-up report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors for the biennium 2002-2003 (DP/2006/13) and updated members on the steps taken by UNDP to address the recommendations – 80 in total – made by the United Nations Board of Auditors (BOA) in connection with the financial report and audited financial statements of UNDP for the 2002-2003 biennium.

49. As of January 2006, UNDP had reported the implementation rate of 55 audit recommendations, 13 of which had already been validated by BOA and the remainder of which were expected to be validated by the close of final audit in mid-2006. Save for the recommendation pertaining to the United Nations system as a whole, UNDP expected to implement all the outstanding recommendations by the end of 2006.

50. UNDP has introduced tools and processes to promote transparency in reporting and has reemphasized accountability and responsiveness to audit recommendations.

These include the implementation of the internal control framework; the Atlas data-quality dashboard, the Atlas executive snapshot; the UNDP prescriptive content user guides; a web-based audit recommendation-tracking dashboard (http://audit-dashboard.undp.org) to manage corporate audit issues; and a quality-assurance function established within BOM to analyze systemic issues arising from audit observations.

UNFPA

51. The Director, Division for Oversight Services (DOS), introduced the UNFPA report on follow-up to the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors for 2002-2003: status of implementation of recommendations (DP/FPA/2006/1).

52. Delegations acknowledged UNFPA progress in implementing the recommendations of the Board of Auditors and welcomed the establishment of an oversight committee. Delegations encouraged UNFPA and UNOPS to follow the example of UNDP in ensuring that future reports indicated the priority and time frame for implementation of the recommendations. They asked for information about the current implementation status of Atlas; reconciliation of non-expendable equipment; review of funding mechanisms for UNFPA liability for end-of-service and post-retirement benefits; and measures to bring down travel costs. Delegations inquired if some form of public access could be envisaged for web-based tracking of implementation of audit recommendations.

53. The Director, DOS, UNFPA, agreed with the suggestion to present a summary of the status of implementation in a table and stated that UNFPA would also indicate the category of risk. Concurring with the suggestion that some form of web access be provided, he noted that time was required to set up such a system. He stated that considerable progress had been achieved in reconciliation of non-expendable equipment. He observed that the Atlas system had made a major contribution in terms of expenditure reporting and financial management in the organization. Regarding measures to reduce travel costs, he pointed to increased use of videoconferences; better travel planning to take advantage of cheaper tickets; and enhanced screening of reasons for travel. Concerning the liability for end-of-service and post-retirement benefits, the Director, Division for Management Services, noted that by January 2010 the entire United Nations system would adopt the International Public Sector Accounting Standards based on accrual accounting. Under current United Nations System Accounting Standards, UNFPA was required to disclose the total value of unfunded liability that stood at approximately $60 million at the end of December 2004. However, by 2010 UNFPA would need to record the total amount of such a liability in the financial statements, which would have a significant impact on the financial health of the organization. With respect to funding that liability, UNFPA was currently working with other United Nations organizations for a harmonized approach and taking those and other such discussions into account a proposal would be presented in the future for consideration by the Executive Board.

UNOPS

54. The Deputy Executive Director, UNOPS, introduced the UNOPS follow-up report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors for the biennium 2002-2003 (DP/2006/14), and briefed members on the comprehensive programme undertaken by the organization to address the main concerns reported by

BOA. On the 39 recommendations made by BOA, UNOPS reported a 64 per cent implementation rate, while 31 per cent were under implementation and 5 per cent had yet to be implemented. A risk management and oversight committee had been established to guide the Executive Director on issues of risk mitigation and internal control.

55. The Board welcomed the efforts made by management to improve transparency and managerial accountability in line with the recommendations of BOA, and called on the three organizations to strengthen management and control systems, including risk-management systems. Noting the increased scrutiny to which the United Nations system was now subject, the Board also called upon management to intensify fraud prevention and anti-corruption measures.

56. The Executive Board adopted decision 2006/8: Follow-up reports on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors for the biennium 2002-2003 (UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS).

X. Report to the Economic and Social Council

57. In compliance with General Assembly resolution 59/250 on the TCPR, and in accordance with the request from Member States for greater harmonization and coordination, UNDP and UNFPA reported jointly on progress towards implementing resolution 59/250 and highlighted the level of cooperation between UNDP and UNFPA in a number of areas, both jointly and as part of UNDG. The Deputy Executive Director, UNFPA, introduced the Joint report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to the Economic and Social Council (E/2006/5). The UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Resources and Strategic Partnerships introduced the items specific to UNDP.

58. Delegations welcomed the first-ever joint UNDP and UNFPA report to ECOSOC and noted that the practice should continue. They appreciated the clarity and inclusiveness of the report and were pleased to note the progress made by UNDP and UNFPA in implementing General Assembly resolution 59/250 on the TCPR. One delegation stated that it would have preferred a more analytical report. Delegations were encouraged by the trend in increased contributions for both UNFPA and UNDP. Underscoring the urgent need to coordinate the activities of various United Nations organizations, delegations were pleased to note the progress achieved in the area of simplification and harmonization, as well as in gender mainstreaming. They emphasized the leading role of governments in the development process. They stated that the joint office should not result in increased administrative costs and there should be separate financial accounting by the concerned agencies. Delegations urged strengthening of the resident coordinator system as well as of the selection process.

59. The Deputy Executive Director, UNFPA, appreciated the encouraging comments from delegations and agreed that more should be done to enhance the resident coordinator selection process. He underscored that UNFPA played an active role in gender mainstreaming. He confirmed that UNFPA would continue its efforts in the

area of simplification and harmonization. He noted the Fund's long involvement in and commitment to common services and the joint office model.

60. The Executive Board took note of the report and agreed to transmit it to ECOSOC, together with the Board's comments.

XI. Programming process

61. The conference room paper on cost-efficient approaches to providing programme-level data (DP/2006/CRP.2-DP/FPA/2006/CRP.1) was introduced by the UNDP MYFF team leader, who briefed members on UNDP and UNFPA reporting systems, highlighting issues and challenges that the organizations confront in presenting programme-level data. The Chief, Strategic Planning Office (SPO) UNFPA, made additional remarks.

62. The MYFF team leader alerted members to a potential divergence between the request of the Board that organization-specific programme-level data be made available to Board members and the broader United Nations harmonization and simplification process and the new international aid effectiveness principles. A series of cost-effective approaches to sharing programme-level data using the current MYFF reporting process was presented by the MYFF team leader.

63. Delegations took note of the different MYFF structures and reporting systems of UNDP and UNFPA. Emphasizing accountability and the need to report on the use of resources and results achieved, they stated that programme-level data could be provided when an old country programme was ending and a new one was about to begin, as well as at the mid-point or the end of the MYFF cycle. Delegations hoped to get a clear definition of programme-level data and added that national capacity was critical for data gathering, analysis, dissemination and use. One delegation noted that the paper could have been more daring and technical. The delegation welcomed the attention being given to outcome indicators in the preparation of the new MYFF. Delegations stated that duplication should be avoided and that there should be no increased reporting burden on countries or on UNCTs.

64. The Chief, SPO, UNFPA, stated that a review of results was provided at the end of the country programme and that revealing that data could be considered. He underscored that the MYFF cycle varied from the cycles of the country programmes; therefore sharing country programme data at the mid-point or the end of the MYFF cycle would not be a practical way to provide an accurate picture of country programme performance. In the coming months UNFPA would prepare its new MYFF and its design was currently being reviewed. Issues raised by delegations would be taken into consideration in designing the new MYFF. He added that attention was being focused on the issues of attribution and accountability, including the accountability of country offices.

65. The Executive Board adopted decision 2006/9: Cost-efficient approaches to providing programme-level data.

UNFPA segment

Statement by the Executive Director

66. In her statement, the Executive Director focused on four UNFPA priorities for 2006: Follow-up to the 2005 World Summit; United Nations reform; accountability; and regionalization. She stressed the need to fully mobilize efforts and run full speed ahead in order to register success in achieving the MDGs by 2015. She underscored that world leaders had committed themselves at the World Summit to "achieving universal access to reproductive health by 2015, as set out at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)". She stated that this was the highest level of endorsement of the critical role that reproductive health plays in the achievement of the MDGs. UNFPA welcomed the resolve of world leaders to promote gender equality and eliminate pervasive discrimination and violence against women and girls. The Executive Director underscored the importance of reproductive health commodity security (RHCS) and noted that it was a priority area for follow-up to the World Summit.

67. Other key issues that she highlighted included the following: culturally sensitive approaches to promote human rights; the new partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health; follow-up to the recommendations of the Global Task Team (GTT) on improving AIDS coordination; and the building of a coherent and transparent system of accountability for achieving results, including the constitution of an oversight committee of five independent members with expertise on audit and finance. She also drew attention to the issue of migration and noted that the UNFPA State of World Population Report for 2006 would focus on women and migration. She announced that the Secretary-General had appointed her as the Chair of the High-Level Committee on Management. She concluded by emphasizing the deep commitment of UNFPA staff members around the world to doing their utmost to promote the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity and to ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person is free of HIV/AIDS, and every girl and woman is treated with dignity and respect.

68. Delegations commended the excellent statement of the Executive Director and the work of UNFPA. They underscored the commitment made by leaders at the World Summit to achieve the goal of universal access to reproductive health by 2015: the world leaders had agreed that the aforementioned ICPD goal should be integrated in strategies to attain development goals, including the MDGs. Delegations stressed the centrality of reproductive health to poverty eradication and called on donors to increase funding towards that end. They emphasized that gender equality, HIV/AIDS and reproductive health must be at the top of the international agenda. They encouraged UNFPA commitment to and global leadership in promoting RHCS and underscored the importance of RHCS to HIV prevention. Delegations stated that implementing the GTT recommendations was critical for improving HIV/AIDS outcomes. The delegation of Pakistan appreciated the assistance provided by UNFPA in the wake of the October earthquake and noted that UNFPA with its mobile services was one of the first agencies to reach the people in the remote, disaster-stricken areas of Pakistan.

69. Underscoring the need for deeper and faster reform of the United Nations system, delegations commended the Executive Director for recognizing the need for change and for her commitment to United Nations reform and revitalization. Delegations urged that clear benchmarks be established for measuring progress, as well as targets for efficiency gains and for the number of UNFPA Resident Coordinators to be appointed in the next few years. Delegations recognized the need for more harmonized and simplified donor procedures and longer term, more assured funding for those agencies making real progress on reforms. They stressed the importance of stronger coalitions and partnerships for poverty reduction strategies, sector-wide approaches and health sector support. Delegations stated that they looked forward to working with UNFPA regarding the upcoming high-level dialogue on international migration. They were interested in learning more about UNFPA plans for regionalization. They commended the culturally sensitive approaches of UNFPA to programming, including in the area of gender-based violence.

70. Delegations were very pleased to note that in 2005 there had been 171 contributors to UNFPA. They stated that it was a clear sign of recognition of the crucial role of UNFPA in the architecture of development and in the advancement of reproductive health and rights. They underscored that for the work of the Fund to be sustainable, the ICPD Programme of Action must be enshrined in national development plans and strategies. Sweden announced that in 2006 it would contribute 400 million kroner (approximately $50 million) to UNFPA. Norway announced that it would make a multi-year pledge to UNFPA.

71. The delegation of the United States made a statement opposing the provision by the Fund of reproductive health and family planning support to China. The delegation of China made a response objecting to the statement by the United States delegation. The delegation of South Africa, speaking on behalf of members and observers of the Executive Board who were also members of the Group of 77 and China, made a strong statement of support for the work of UNFPA and underlined support for the China programme. The delegation of Indonesia, speaking on behalf of the Asian States, expressed full support for the China programme and the work of UNFPA, adding that the programme reflected the ICPD Programme of Action and fit national needs. Numerous other delegations took the floor to support the work of UNFPA, including in China, and the commitment of the Fund to the ICPD agenda and to achieving the MDGs.

72. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for their support and guidance, including delegations that had announced contributions to UNFPA. She appreciated that delegations had underscored the centrality of reproductive health to poverty eradication and achieving the MDGs. She noted that the challenge was how to operationalize the commitment made at the World Summit to ensure universal access to reproductive health by 2015. She reiterated her commitment to ensuring RHCS and stated that without commodities there could be no programme. Concerning the Global Programme for RHCS, she noted that $150 million was needed for the next four years. She underlined that in addition to providing commodities it was essential to build capacity, including in such areas as logistics management, procurement and data systems. She was pleased that a number of countries were including RHCS in their national budgets. Recalling the Stockholm call to action, she stressed the highly important role of finance ministers in ensuring financing for reproductive health.

73. The Executive Director reaffirmed the commitment of UNFPA to following up on the GTT recommendations, including with regard to the division of labour among agencies. She stated that UNFPA was a very active co-sponsor of UNAIDS. Regarding international migration, she underscored the support of the Fund for the partnership and noted the ongoing technical work of UNFPA through its Technical Support Division, as well as its geographical divisions. She highlighted the commitment of the Fund to results-based management and underscored the importance of achieving results at the country level: it was crucial that countries were able to have clear results as an outcome of UNFPA assistance. Concerning regionalization, she noted that it was a work in progress and UNFPA would dialogue with the Executive Board members on the subject. At present, a functional analysis was under way and the findings would help UNFPA to develop models and options. Further information on regionalization would be provided at the annual session of the Board.

74. She thanked the delegations for their positive comments on the UNFPA commitment and contribution to United Nations reform. She announced that she would be amending the job description of the Deputy Executive Director (Management) to include responsibilities pertaining to United Nations reform. She noted that the UNFPA task force on United Nations reform would, inter alia, provide benchmarks to measure progress. She underscored the crucial role of countries in ensuring that the ICPD agenda survived. Noting that it was a "sensitive" agenda, she emphasized that UNFPA played a critical role in bringing international attention to the ICPD agenda. The Executive Director concluded by expressing her special thanks and appreciation to Mr. Francois Rohner, Switzerland, who would be departing from the Board. In particular, she thanked him for his wisdom, his deep understanding of and commitment to development work, and his strong support for culturally sensitive programming.

XII. Country programmes and related matters

75. The Executive Board approved the following 19 country programmes on a no-objection basis: Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Ghana, Namibia, Swaziland, Uganda, Albania, Georgia, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Turkey, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Viet Nam and Peru.

76. Following the approval of the 19 country programmes, numerous delegations made a strong statement of support with regard to the work of UNFPA in China. Delegations stated that UNFPA was a "force for good" by playing a crucial and catalytic role through its work in China, particularly in the selected counties. Delegations aligned themselves with an earlier statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. They emphasized that the China programme successfully demonstrated that a client-oriented quality of care approach to reproductive health and family planning was a viable alternative to a target-driven administrative system.

77. In a common statement, several delegations stated: "We believe that progress in reform can be enhanced through constructive engagement and support – exactly of the type UNFPA provides...". Delegations went on to state unequivocally that "UNFPA's activities in China, as in the rest of the world, are in strict conformity

with the unanimously adopted Programme of Action of the ICPD, and play a key role in supporting our common endeavour: the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Our delegations believe UNFPA deserves strong support to pursue these activities – thereby contributing to reaching the MDGs, particularly those related to HIV/AIDS, maternal health and child mortality. We therefore support the country programme in China".

78. Referring to the Cape Verde common country programme, one delegation urged UNFPA to maintain accountability to the Executive Board, including for budgeting, financial and programmatic reporting, and evaluation. The delegations of Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde and China thanked the Board for approving their country programmes.

XIII. Other matters

Post-conflict peacebuilding: role of UNDP and UNFPA in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo

79. The President of the Board introduced the item, highlighting the emerging understanding of the interconnectedness between peace and development as reaffirmed in the report of the Secretary General *In Larger Freedom* and noting the role of development agencies in strengthening national capacities to manage and settle disputes. Citing the example of countries in sub-Saharan Africa that have been affected by complex emergencies and the rampant spread of HIV/AIDS, the President illustrated how such emergencies undermine the achievement of the MDGs.

Angola

80. The Minister of Planning of the Republic of Angola briefed members on the economic, physical and social impact of the 27-year conflict that had plagued the country until 2002; described the challenges and opportunities of the post-conflict years; and outlined the policies of her Government towards reestablishing basic social services and economic rehabilitation.

81. The President of the Angolan Network of AIDS Service Organizations presented a demographic profile of the country and an overview of the HIV/AIDS pandemic there, detailing the present and desired role of civil society organizations in the multi-stakeholder fight against HIV/AIDS.

82. During the discussion, delegations were pleased to note the number of NGOs working in Angola in the fight against HIV/AIDS and called on the international community to support efforts to fight the epidemic in the country in a coordinated manner. Delegations emphasized the need to take into account the regional and sub-regional dimensions of the AIDS pandemic. The delegation of Sweden announced that it was preparing to support, in the amount of $2 million over three years, an HIV/AIDS programme in Angola, directed to youth, designed by the provincial government in Luanda and UNFPA.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

83. The Minister for Women's Affairs and Family, Democratic Republic of the Congo, made a presentation on sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response towards peace consolidation. The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General made a presentation on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

84. Delegations noted that the discussion on peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was very timely, and they welcomed the steps taken by the Government to address the challenges facing the country. They emphasized that international support was essential to achieving progress on the path to peace, and were pleased to note the efforts of UNDP and UNFPA to support peacebuilding. They underscored the need to build institutions that could deliver services to the people. Delegations appreciated the candour and frankness of the panelists in delineating the problems confronting the country, including the problem of sexual and gender-based violence. Delegations underscored the resilience of women, who were in the forefront of building a better future in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

85. The delegation of Belgium stated that it was proud to support the joint programme against sexual and gender-based violence and noted that it was fundamental to peacebuilding. The delegation thanked the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for its commitment and leadership and praised UNFPA for its work in driving the issue. The delegation commended the lead role of UNFPA in managing the joint programme, stating that bringing the whole United Nations family together in one programme was no small feat. The delegation emphasized that an essential element of United Nations reform was to enhance field effectiveness. The delegation encouraged UNFPA to compile and share lessons learned from the joint programme.

Additional events

86. Parallel to the Executive Board session, UNDP organized an exhibit on gender mainstreaming in UNDP to showcase the often-unheralded country offices successes in gender mainstreaming, as well as a working luncheon on the UNDAF process in Madagascar attended by senior Government officials, the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the UNFPA Resident Representative.

Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP

Capacity-building and capacity development

87. The UNICEF Executive Director introduced the item and background paper. She emphasized the need to integrate capacity-strengthening objectives in national development strategies towards achievement of the MDGs. The background paper drew on ongoing work of the UNDG Executive Committee and preliminary outputs of the UNDG working group on capacity development. The paper provided examples of common initiatives by United Nations organizations and ideas on how they could respond better to national needs.

88. The Deputy Permanent Secretary, Public Service Management, Office of the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, spoke of his country's experience and the considerable support of the United Nations system. Potential areas for further support included the national development strategy and policy advice on cross-sectoral issues. Challenges for the United Nations centred on balancing collaborative and joint programming; maximizing prospects for participation of various offices; and addressing bureaucratic operating modalities.

89. The UNICEF Representative in the United Republic of Tanzania spoke on behalf of the UNCT. Discussing the United Nations role, he said that the establishment of the Tanzania Socio-Economic Database, based on DevInfo, and its development into an Internet-based tool for internalizing data, were concrete examples of support that helped not only to monitor poverty but also to develop poverty reduction plans. The United Nations system needed to provide world-class capacity-development expertise; streamline its procedures; strengthen its policies, tools and procedures for participation in sectoral programmes; and optimize its role regarding general budget support.

90. Delegations emphasized the critical role of the United Nations in capacity development. A holistic approach to capacity development should include attention to higher education, wage policy and other incentives, and to reversing the 'brain drain', with the United Nations playing a strategic role. The background paper should be revised for the annual session of the Economic and Social Council to show the progress made by the United Nations; indicate the common tools and staff profiles for support to capacity development; and provide a clear plan of action, with benchmarks.

91. Speakers asked how capacity development would be integrated into programming and called for closer collaboration with the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Bank. Information was requested in several areas: challenges, such as adapting to the changing environment; lessons learned; unified support by United Nations agencies on the ground, moving from project to sectoral and other harmonized approaches; how the United Nations would be at the centre of capacity development reform; and how it would promote South-South cooperation.

92. Several delegates requested a more strategic report that covered achievements and constraints, gender issues, and a greater analysis of underlying challenges and practical measures. There should be more focus on results, especially regarding the MDGs; institutional capacity development, which the United Nations was best

suited to address; lessons learned; capacity development in fragile States; and improved performance and results, especially regarding support for reform of public procurement and financial systems.

Transition from relief to development, focusing on natural disasters

93. The President of the WFP Executive Board, stressing the importance of national leadership in the transition agenda, welcomed the participation of the Representative of the Government of Pakistan, and the Representative of the UNCT in Pakistan at the Joint Meeting.

94. The Representative of the Government of Pakistan discussed the necessity of a coherent governmental role in the coordination of both the relief and recovery stages of response. He urged that in responding to natural disasters particular attention be paid to vulnerable people, who are often the worst affected. He also suggested that insufficient preparedness for natural disasters was a major stumbling block to ensuring the quickest possible transition from relief to development.

95. The WFP Senior Deputy Executive Director welcomed the fact that it is now well established that 'transition' follows both conflicts and natural disasters. Accordingly, UNDG agencies – through the UNDG Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) Working Group and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) clusters in particular – were building tools and capacity to help UNCTs.

96. The Representative of the UNCT in Pakistan described the newly established IASC cluster system and its successes in the Pakistan earthquake response. A country-based early recovery cluster convened in Pakistan and produced a framework to make transition a conscious part of the UNCT emergency response. One of the important contributions of the cluster was to support spontaneous recovery efforts from the early days of the emergency response. The Representative stressed that IASC clusters should serve as collective decision-making bodies rather than meetings that push parochial interests. Important lessons learned included the need for Government leadership and coordination, the success in linking emergency response to longer-term transition and development strategies, and the need to ensure that surge capacity is sustained beyond immediate relief and is extended to the early recovery and transition periods as well.

97. Questions and discussion with delegations revolved around several key issues:

(a) *Protection.* Delegations welcomed the protection dimensions after natural disasters described in the background paper and encouraged more explicit attention to vulnerable groups; the social impact of natural disasters; the gender-related effects of disasters; reproductive health; and children and orphans.

(b) *Post-disaster needs assessment framework.* The UNDG/ECHA Working Group was encouraged to continue working towards a comprehensive framework that would complement the IASC cluster exercise and address gaps such as property and land rights, protection, and gender.

(c) *Lessons learned.* Delegations encouraged UNDG to capture lessons learned in transition responses, perhaps through the upcoming real-time evaluation, to ensure they inform future guidance.

(d) *Inclusiveness*. UNDG was urged to continue making efforts to ensure that NGOs, the World Bank and other international financial institutions are brought fully into common, nationally-led transition responses.

(e) *National leadership*. Delegations encouraged national leadership, recognizing the daunting capacity-building implications in the poorest countries facing transition challenges.

(f) *Effective coordination and funding*. Delegations recognized the need to provide systematic coordination support to resident coordinators from the onset of a natural disaster to help them to coordinate early recovery activities and United Nations system interventions.

HIV/AIDS: Follow-up to the recommendations of the Global Task Team

98. The item was chaired and introduced by the President, UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board. The UNDP Administrator spoke on behalf of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP, providing updates on follow-up to the Global Task Team process and emphasizing links with United Nations reform efforts. Country-level experiences were presented by the Executive Secretary of the National Council on the Fight Against AIDS, Mali, and by the UNFPA Representative and Chair, United Nations theme group on HIV/AIDS, Jamaica. The Director of Country and Regional Support, UNAIDS, provided an assessment of progress and challenges in implementing the recommendations.

99. The panellists highlighted progress in several areas, including the division of labour among UNAIDS co-sponsors; establishment of joint United Nations teams on AIDS at the country-level; the Global Joint Problem-Solving and Implementation Support Team; and mainstreaming HIV/AIDS into poverty reduction strategy papers. Updates were provided on efforts to internalize the Global Task Team recommendations in several countries, and panellists noted that the recommendations were helping to reinforce the 'three ones' principles for coordination of national responses and to contribute to United Nations reform efforts. However, to ensure effective support to national responses, management arrangements, planning, reporting and accountability should be streamlined at all levels to avoid coordination bottlenecks and complex support structures. From a programme county perspective, in addition to good management at the country level, a more effective response would require strengthening of national capacity, pragmatic actions and confidence in partners.

100. Delegations welcomed the presentations and the spirit of cooperation and collaboration among the four organizations. They expressed support for the Global Task Team process and commended the progress made in advancing implementation of the recommendations. Delegations applauded the establishment of the UNAIDS division of labour, and acknowledged the importance of the lead roles of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP. It was noted that further discussions were required at the country level to ensure that the lead agency role would take into account co-sponsor experience and capacity to deliver. The four agencies were urged to continue to strengthen mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS within the work of their organizations.

101. Delegations welcomed the establishment of joint United Nations teams on AIDS and stated that these should help to improve coherence and coordination of

the response at country-level, as well as accountability of individual agencies. The UNAIDS secretariat and UNDG were encouraged to guide the process at the country level. Delegations emphasized that simplification of processes and procedures should remain a priority and cautioned against expansion of coordination mechanisms. In underscoring that HIV/ADS remained a critical emergency and development challenge, delegations recognized that national leadership and ownership were vital to implementing effective responses. The need to ensure availability of resources to support country and regional efforts was highlighted, in addition to human resource capacity challenges and issues of vulnerability, human rights and gender.

102. Delegations emphasized that commitment and accountability for advancing the Global Task Team recommendations should come from all stakeholders, including national governments, donors and the United Nations system. They underscored that successful implementation depended on the full partnership of all key actors to ensure alignment, simplification and harmonization for effective action and results at the country level.

Simplification and harmonization, with a special focus on the programming process

103. The President, UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board, chaired the session and introduced the item. The Executive Director, UNFPA, made a presentation on behalf of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP. The Permanent Representative of Cape Verde and the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Representative of the United Nations funds and programmes, Cape Verde, also made presentations.

104. The UNFPA Executive Director highlighted the proposals from the UNDG Executive Committee on enhancing the alignment of the analytical work of the United Nations system with national processes; reducing the burden of the programme preparation process; and increasing national ownership. The ideas would be further discussed with Member States and national partners in preparing a jointly elaborated paper for the respective Boards in June.

105. Concerning the common country programme process in Cape Verde, the Permanent Representative noted that the experience of the Government had been very positive and had largely met the need to ensure that the United Nations programme responded to national priorities, including the MDGs. The programme had allowed alignment with the National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction and had contributed to improved coordination and management of the programming process

106. The United Nations Representative for Cape Verde underscored the positive experience from the UNCT perspective, both in terms of adhering to the principles for simplification and responding to the needs of the Government. She noted the importance of regional and headquarters support and guidance in new approaches, and delineated lessons that could be utilized elsewhere.

107. Delegations appreciated the presentations and broadly welcomed the ideas contained in the background document with regard to the programme preparation and approval process. They commended the funds and programmes for taking forward the Paris aid effectiveness agenda and implementing the TCPR resolution.

They were pleased to learn about the common country programme process and joint office model in Cape Verde.

108. Delegations underscored the critical importance of national leadership, ownership and capacity. They emphasized the need to ensure the effective involvement of specialized agencies and for agency mandates to remain responsive to national priorities and needs. Transparency and accountability for results and resources should be ensured in any new processes; transaction costs reduced; and efficiency and effectiveness increased. Delegations envisaged the need to enhance the capacity and role of the Resident Coordinator and UNCTs, including the ability to facilitate effective evaluation.

109. Delegations noted that the programming process proposals had implications for the governance mechanisms and working methods of the Executive Boards. While most delegations took a positive view of shortening the time frame for approval, more discussion was needed on the nature of new Board procedures.

110. Regarding the Cape Verde experience, delegations asked how non-resident and specialized agencies would be involved. Inquiring about the unified budget, they urged further harmonizing of budgetary matters, while maintaining clear accountability. It was noted that existing procedures for overall programme funds remained in place, and that UNDG would continue to monitor programme impact in Cape Verde. UNDG was reviewing how to move forward on other joint offices.